



# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

## April 1990

U.S. Department of Commerce  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

CB-90-94

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT., Friday, May 11, 1990

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for April adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$ 148.6 billion, a decrease of 0.6 percent ( $\pm 1.1\%$ ) from the previous month, but 3.4 percent above April 1989. Total sales in the February through April period were 5.2 percent above the same period a year ago.

Durable goods decreased 1.6 percent ( $\pm 2.9\%$ ) from the previous month.

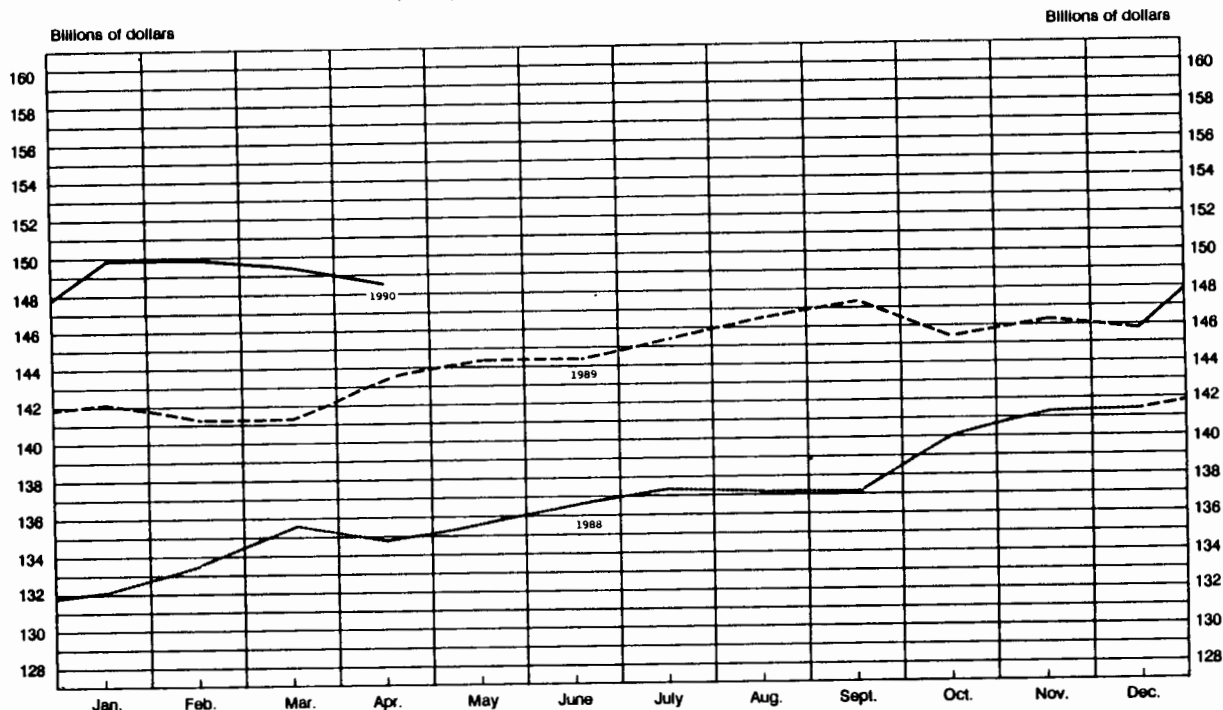
Nondurable goods were unchanged from the previous month but were 5.7 percent above last year. General merchandise stores decreased 0.7 percent from March but were 5.7 percent above April 1989. Food stores were up 6.6 percent from the previous year.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for May is scheduled to be released June 13, 1990, at 8:30 a.m.

### ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1988-April 1990

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences)



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This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board (N-8-1) (202-377-3870) and through the Census Bureau's online information service-CENDATA. CENDATA is available from Dialog Information Services, INC. (1-800-334-2464) and CompuServe (1-800-848-8199). The CENDATA staff at the Bureau of the Census (301-763-2074) can provide content information and general guidance.

**Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business**

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
		1990			1989		1990			1989	
		Apr. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Mar. <sup>2</sup> prel.
	Retail trade, total.....	145,456	148,343	127,338	139,785	141,371	148,640	149,547	149,904	143,732	141,214
	Total (excl. auto group)...	113,723	115,143	99,562	107,196	107,961	118,153	118,204	118,496	111,854	110,269
	Durable goods, total.....	53,958	54,867	46,720	53,584	53,569	53,794	54,668	55,037	53,975	52,579
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	8,234	7,520	5,911	8,150	6,966	7,790	8,001	8,062	7,730	7,380
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	5,472	4,433	5,695	5,100	(*)	5,865	5,974	5,650	5,414
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,016	789	1,042	891	(*)	1,074	1,059	980	959
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	31,733	33,200	27,776	32,589	33,410	30,487	31,343	31,408	31,878	30,945
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	29,039	30,471	25,528	30,079	30,982	27,735	28,558	28,619	29,345	28,450
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	26,694	22,478	26,120	27,283	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,729	2,248	2,510	2,428	(*)	2,785	2,789	2,533	2,495
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	7,199	7,538	6,698	6,908	7,118	7,825	7,797	7,813	7,511	7,382
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	4,180	3,657	3,956	4,022	(*)	4,231	4,228	4,138	4,059
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,653	2,394	2,381	2,494	(*)	2,810	2,843	2,727	2,679
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	691	606	632	648	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	91,498	93,476	80,618	86,201	87,802	94,846	94,879	94,867	89,757	88,635
53	General merchandise group stores..	16,272	16,219	12,674	15,305	15,165	17,608	17,729	17,944	16,653	16,460
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	13,252	13,226	10,105	12,482	12,328	14,311	14,360	14,498	13,538	13,328
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts.)	(*)	13,651	10,467	12,871	12,714	(*)	14,838	14,996	13,900	13,730
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	546	464	519	581	(*)	588	605	552	574
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	2,447	2,105	2,304	2,256	(*)	2,781	2,841	2,563	2,558
54	Food stores.....	29,519	30,906	27,304	27,917	29,005	30,675	30,338	30,296	28,788	28,571
541	Grocery stores.....	27,709	29,076	25,648	26,370	27,275	28,834	28,506	28,466	27,158	26,898
554	Gasoline service stations.....	9,875	9,777	8,786	9,636	9,093	9,905	10,007	10,041	9,665	9,365
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	7,624	7,541	5,668	7,027	7,251	7,772	7,923	7,814	7,554	7,184
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	700	562	736	691	(*)	814	798	791	779
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,692	2,031	2,545	2,602	(*)	2,825	2,701	2,710	2,631
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	2,068	1,566	1,811	1,881	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,477	1,059	1,384	1,468	(*)	1,435	1,431	1,417	1,284
58	Eating and drinking places.....	15,105	15,273	13,262	14,382	14,293	15,227	15,258	15,191	14,382	14,350
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	5,275	5,344	4,902	4,701	5,100	5,410	5,344	5,346	4,948	5,010
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,610	1,419	1,547	1,536	(*)	1,724	1,701	1,674	1,657
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	370	284	339	357	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	36,132	29,596	33,461	34,032	(*)	39,176	39,309	36,910	36,226

\*Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available. <sup>2</sup> Revised

<sup>1</sup> Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-90-03.

<sup>2</sup> Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

<sup>3</sup> Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

<sup>4</sup> GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

**Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business**

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Apr. 1990 advance from--		Mar. 1990 preliminary from--		Feb. 1990 through Apr. 1990	
		Mar. 1990 prelim.	Apr. 1989 final	Feb. 1990 final	Mar. 1989 final	Nov. 1989 through Jan. 1990	Feb. 1989 through Apr. 1989
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.6	+3.4	-0.2	+5.9	+1.4	+5.2
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.0	+5.6	-0.2	+7.2	+2.2	+6.7
	Durable goods, total.....	-1.6	-0.3	-0.7	+4.0	+0.5	+2.6
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-2.6	+0.8	-0.8	+8.4	+2.9	+4.8
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-2.7	-4.4	-0.2	+1.3	-1.7	-0.5
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-2.9	-5.5	-0.2	+0.4	-2.0	-1.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+0.4	+4.2	-0.2	+5.6	+3.0	+4.8
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.0	+5.7	0.0	+7.0	+1.9	+6.7
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-0.7	+5.7	-1.2	+7.7	+2.2	+7.7
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.3	+5.7	-1.0	+7.7	+2.6	+7.6
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	-1.1	+8.1	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+1.1	+6.6	+0.1	+6.2	+2.1	+6.3
541	Grocery stores.....	+1.2	+6.2	+0.1	+6.0	+1.9	+6.0
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-1.0	+2.5	-0.3	+6.9	+0.6	+6.0
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-1.9	+2.9	+1.4	+10.3	+1.5	+6.9
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.2	+5.9	+0.4	+6.3	+4.1	+6.0
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.2	+9.3	0.0	+6.7	+1.0	+7.1

**Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies, by Kind of Business**

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted <sup>1</sup>		
		Mar. 1990 prelim.	Feb. 1990 final	Mar. 1989	Mar. 1990 prelim.	Feb. 1990 final	Mar. <sup>r</sup> 1989
	Retail trade, total.....	55,332	46,399	51,449	56,924	57,118	52,564
53	General merchandise group stores.....	14,903	11,642	13,944	16,350	16,539	15,201
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	12,802	9,806	11,906	13,946	14,069	12,927
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	13,215	10,159	12,279	14,333	14,554	13,303
533	Variety stores.....	427	358	462	464	486	460
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,674	1,478	1,576	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	17,545	15,464	16,441	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	17,323	15,247	16,213	16,770	16,792	15,787
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,199	2,997	3,933	4,391	4,349	3,840
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,457	1,061	1,406	1,522	1,476	1,393
566	Shoe stores.....	952	635	924	919	912	783
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,232	2,921	3,037	3,245	3,235	2,969

NA Not available. <sup>r</sup>Revised

<sup>1</sup> Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-90-03.

<sup>2</sup> Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Note: The Group II component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments according to the most recent update of multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar volume cutoffs which vary by kind of business).



## Sample Design and Reliability of Data

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the subsample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference.

Percentage differences between advance and full sample preliminary estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from approximately - 0.4 percent to + 1.2 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.4 percent for the past 12 months. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher. Sampling variability of and revisions to advance-to-preliminary estimates are shown in table 4 below.

Preliminary estimates for March 1990 and final estimates for February 1990 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for March (BR-90-03). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of revisions and the techniques used in developing the estimates.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, indicates a range about the estimate which corresponds to a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the estimate is up .8 percent and the margin of sampling error is 1.2 percentage points above or below the estimate, then the indicated range is - .4 percent to + 2.0 percent. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability along with additional measures of sampling variability.

Table 4. Sampling Variability of and Revision to Advance-to-Preliminary Estimate

SIC code	Kind of Business	Estimated coefficient of Variation in percent of the						Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Advance-to- preliminary ratio		Ratio to same month a year ago	Dollar volume sales est.	Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter					
		Range <sup>1</sup>		Median	Median	Median	Median	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Aver. of absolute diff.
		From	To					From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.8	1.0	-0.4	+1.2	+0.1	0.4
	Total (excl. auto).	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.9	-0.3	+0.5	+0.1	0.2
	Durable goods, total..	1.4	2.0	1.6	2.3	1.8	2.2	-0.9	+1.7	-0.1	0.7
52	Building materials, group stores.....	1.1	3.0	1.7	3.8	3.2	3.1	-1.9	+3.1	0.0	0.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	2.4	2.0	3.2	2.6	3.0	-2.1	+2.9	-0.1	0.9
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.3	2.0	1.6	4.0	2.8	3.3	-2.5	+3.3	-0.1	1.0
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores.....	1.3	3.8	2.1	4.2	3.9	3.1	-1.9	+5.0	+0.5	1.5
	Nondur. stores, total...	0.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.9	-0.2	+0.7	+0.1	0.2
53	General merch. group, total.	0.2	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	-0.9	+1.3	0.0	0.4
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	-0.5	+1.2	+0.1	0.4
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.3	1.0	1.7	1.3	1.6	-0.4	+1.5	+0.2	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.3	1.8	1.3	1.6	-0.5	+1.3	+0.2	0.4
554	Gasoline service stations...	0.6	1.0	0.9	2.9	2.1	2.7	-1.8	+1.9	0.0	0.7
56	Apparel and acc. stores.....	1.1	3.6	1.7	2.5	2.0	1.9	-3.9	+3.8	+0.2	1.4
58	Eating and drinking .....	0.4	1.9	0.8	2.7	2.3	2.6	-1.3	+1.6	+0.2	0.8
591	Drug and proprietary .....	0.6	1.8	0.7	2.5	1.9	2.1	-1.7	+2.1	+0.3	0.7

<sup>1</sup> The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of November 1988 - October 1989.

<sup>2</sup> The ranges shown for the retail trade total are based on sales estimates adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the 12-month period, April 1989 - March 1990. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period October 1988 - September 1989.

Note: Coefficients of variation for the ratio of current quarter to current quarter a-year-ago estimates are approximately the same as those for the ratio of current quarter to previous quarter. See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.